

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ST MARY'S SCHOOL

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS APRIL 2016

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED APRIL 2017

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The Governing Body is committed to:

- safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, of children and young people;
- promoting equality of opportunity and community cohesion where the diversity of different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

It expects all staff, volunteers and other workers to share this commitment.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ST MARY'S CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. PURPOSE

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. Schools and colleges and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Schools should work with Social Care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, July 2015)

The document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, July 2015) **MUST** be read in conjunction with this policy and should be kept as an appendix to the school's child protection policy.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 St Mary's School takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. "The welfare of the child is paramount" (Children Act 1989).

2.2 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (*Section 157 for Independent schools*) places a statutory responsibility on the governing body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school.

2.3 There are three main elements to our Child Protection policy:

- **Prevention** through the creation of a positive school atmosphere and the teaching, and pastoral support offered to pupils.
- **Protection** by following agreed procedures and ensuring all staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.
- **Support** to pupils who may have been abused.

2.4 This policy applies to all pupils, staff, parents, governors, volunteers, students and visitors to our school.

2.5 This school recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

3. SCHOOL ETHOS

Our school is committed to keeping children safe and aims to:

- Create a culture of vigilance where the welfare of our pupils is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken
- Establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the school they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty
- Ensure pupils receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to develop healthy and safe relationships
- Include in the curriculum material which will help pupils develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills
- Protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values and to promote respect for all others
- Facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded and our system of democratic government
- Provide a curriculum which actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations
- Make parents/carers aware of the school policies and practice for safeguarding and ensure that, wherever possible, every effort will be made to establish open and honest effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies

4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

4.1 Child protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB)

4.2 In Essex, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures](#) (ESCB, August 2015)

4.3 Our school also works in accordance with the statutory guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' (DfE, July 2015), '[Working Together](#)' (DfE, 2015) and the local guidance document '[Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex](#)' (ESCB, 2013)

4.4 As of July 2015, the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#) placed a new duty on schools and other education providers. Under section 26 of the Act, schools are required, in the

exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

It requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion
- be safe spaces in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas
- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

Our school works in accordance with the PREVENT Duty and approaches this issue in the same way as any other child protection matter. Any concerns that one of our pupils is at risk in this respect, will be referred to Children’s Social Care in line with the SET procedures.

4.5 As of October 2015, the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of female genital mutilation where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school will operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with existing local safeguarding procedures.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) are shown on the cover sheet of this document.

5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school has responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training and raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures. They must ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They should be a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to Essex Children’s Social Care (Family Operations Hub) are made in accordance with current SET procedures. If for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will act in their absence.

5.3 The Governing Body and school leadership team are responsible for ensuring that the school follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children (*see the school’s ‘Safer Recruitment’ policy for further information*)

5.4 The link governor for safeguarding ensures there is an effective child protection policy in place and that this is updated annually. Governors will not be given details relating to individual child protection cases or situations to ensure confidentiality is not breached.

5.5 The Headteacher and / or the Designated Safeguarding Lead provide an annual report for the governing body detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by all staff and governors and other relevant issues.

5.6 The Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead and link Governor undertakes annually the ESCB School Safeguarding Audit in line with their responsibilities under S.175 (S.157 for Independent schools) of the Education Act 2002.

5.7 The school publishes its Child Protection policy on the school website alongside 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2015).'

5.8 The school actively promotes online safety on its website and signposts stakeholders to information that will help keep children safe online.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, August 2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, July 2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2015)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2013)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

6.2 When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They are given a copy of our school's Child Protection policy, told who our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) is and are informed how to share concerns with them.

6.3 All staff are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and regular awareness training.

6.4 Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead). In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.

6.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Family Operations Hub by telephone and in accordance with the

procedures outlined in the SET procedures (ESCB, 2015) and in 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2013).

6.6 The telephone referral to the Family Operations Hub will be confirmed in writing within 48 hours with the [Family Operations Request for Support](#) form. Essential information will include the pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents are aware of the referral plus any other relevant information or advice given.

6.7 The school will always undertake to share an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with the parents or carers, unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from the Family Operations Hub and / or Essex Police.

6.8 If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should press for re-consideration of the case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

6.9 Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the school to ensure that all staff have unfettered access to safeguarding support.

7. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

7.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Headteacher, all staff members and lead governors access child protection training which is updated regularly, in line with advice from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). Records of any child protection training undertaken is kept for all staff and governors.

7.2 The school ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate

7.3 All staff are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Handbook / Code of Conduct.

8. PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil and will not agree with a pupil to keep a secret as, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

8.2 Staff are informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a 'need to know basis' only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way is held treated confidentially.

9. RECORDS AND MONITORING

9.1 Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

9.2 Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen (if appropriate using a body map to record), putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) who will decide on appropriate action.

9.3 Any file notes are kept in a confidential child protection file (which is separate to the pupil file) in chronological order. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 35 years after the last entry (in line with ECC policy).

9.4 If a pupil transfers from our school to another, their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to the originating school if it goes astray. Copies of this paperwork will be retained by our school, should it be required at a future date.

10. ATTENDANCE AT CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES, CORE GROUP MEETINGS OR CHILD IN NEED MEETINGS

10.1 It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that the school is represented at and that a report is submitted to any child protection conference called for children on the school roll or previously known to them. Where appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer. Whoever attends will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference.

10.2 If a child is made subject to a Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, progress, welfare and presentation. If the school are part of the core group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the school is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed.

11. SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PUPILS

11.1 Our school is committed to ensuring that our pupils receive the right help at the right time

11.2 Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. *(Any incidents of child on child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and follow the same procedures).*

11.3 Our school will endeavour to support all pupils through:

- the curriculum to encourage our pupils to stay safe, develop healthy relationships, self-esteem and self-motivation
- the school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued
- the implementation of the school's behaviour management policies
- a consistent approach from all staff which will endeavour to ensure our pupils know that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued
- regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families
- a commitment to develop open and honest and supportive relationships with parents, always with the child's best interest as paramount
- the development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in all matters of child protection
- recognition that children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse and that staff working in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and / or emotional and behavioural problems must be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse
- recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children are vulnerable and in may be in need of support or protection

12. ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING A MEMBER OF STAFF

12.1 The school works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2015) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). Section 7 of the current SET procedures provides detailed information on this.

12.2 The school has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff will be referred to the Headteacher (or the Deputy Headteacher in their absence). This role is distinct from the Designated Child Protection Lead as the named person should have sufficient status and authority in the school to manage employment procedures. Staffing matters are confidential and the school must operate within statutory guidance around Data Protection.

Where the concern involves the headteacher, it should be reported direct to the Chair of Governors.

SET procedures (ESCB, 2015) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the headteacher, senior named person or the Chair of Governors must inform the duty

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Children's Workforce Allegations Management Team on **03330 139 797** within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO should be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. The school does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

13. WHISTLEBLOWING

Whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider school community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example pupils in the school or members of the public.

All staff are made aware of the duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of staff in line with the school's Code of Conduct / Whistleblowing policy.